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28 November 1973

Colonel John V. Hemler, Jr.
Executive Secretary
Net Technical Assessment Task Force
Room 3C125
The Pentagon

Dear John,

We have reviewed the Conclusions and Recommendations Report of the NATF on the Strategic Bomber Deficiencies Assessment and pass on the following comments for the Task Force's use. We feel the summary is well structured logically, considers the proper questions, and can be of real value. We don't mean to say that we endorse every word, but rather that our few objections could be satisfied without changing the major conclusions of the paper or its analytic flow.

We wish, however, to call your attention to the points with which we do disagree.

a. We feel that intelligence descriptions of Soviet threat capabilities are more than "those demonstrated to date", though they may not reflect worst case capabilities. Much effort is put into defining the current Soviet capability for this is a basis for future capability projections, but consideration of the Soviet capabilities demonstrated in R&D and those that follow from current deployment and R&D is a major point in many studies.

b. We feel that the threat posed by "GCI vectored visual interceptors" even with improved GCI is of a lower level than that posed by advanced radar interceptors. We feel the threat from visual interceptors is oversold in the paper.

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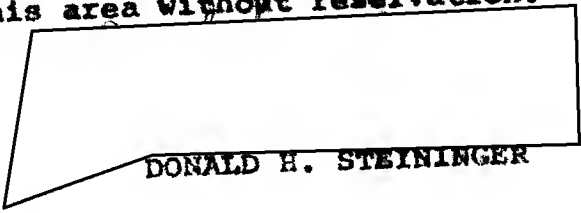
c. We are not sure what systems are referred to as the SA-9 and SA-10, but we certainly agree with the impact of mobile SAM's on future bomber penetration. This is a priority area in our analysis this fiscal year.

d. We feel that potential improvement in Soviet interceptor systems cannot be ignored. However, we feel that the Soviet achievement of technology now available in the U.S. is not certain. Otherwise, they would now have a pulse-Doppler look down radar deployed.

e. We feel your recommendation for more current BOB is not justified. We think such an emphasis would provide only marginal gains in the areas in which you wish improvement. At the same time this would reduce significantly the collection of technical intelligence.

f. The paper correctly stresses that costs and lead times of SOSUS improvements should be weighed against the improved knowledge of Soviet SSBN capabilities that would result. Beyond that, though, three additional factors should be considered: whether the improved knowledge could be used effectively; whether improved knowledge would be worth the cost if other actions (e.g., proliferated inland basing of bombers) were already paid for; and whether other means of warning and/or bomber protection would be more effective than improving SOSUS.

3. Finally, we feel your listing of the intelligence efforts that should be stressed in the future is first rate. We support you in this area without reservation.


DONALD H. STEININGER

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